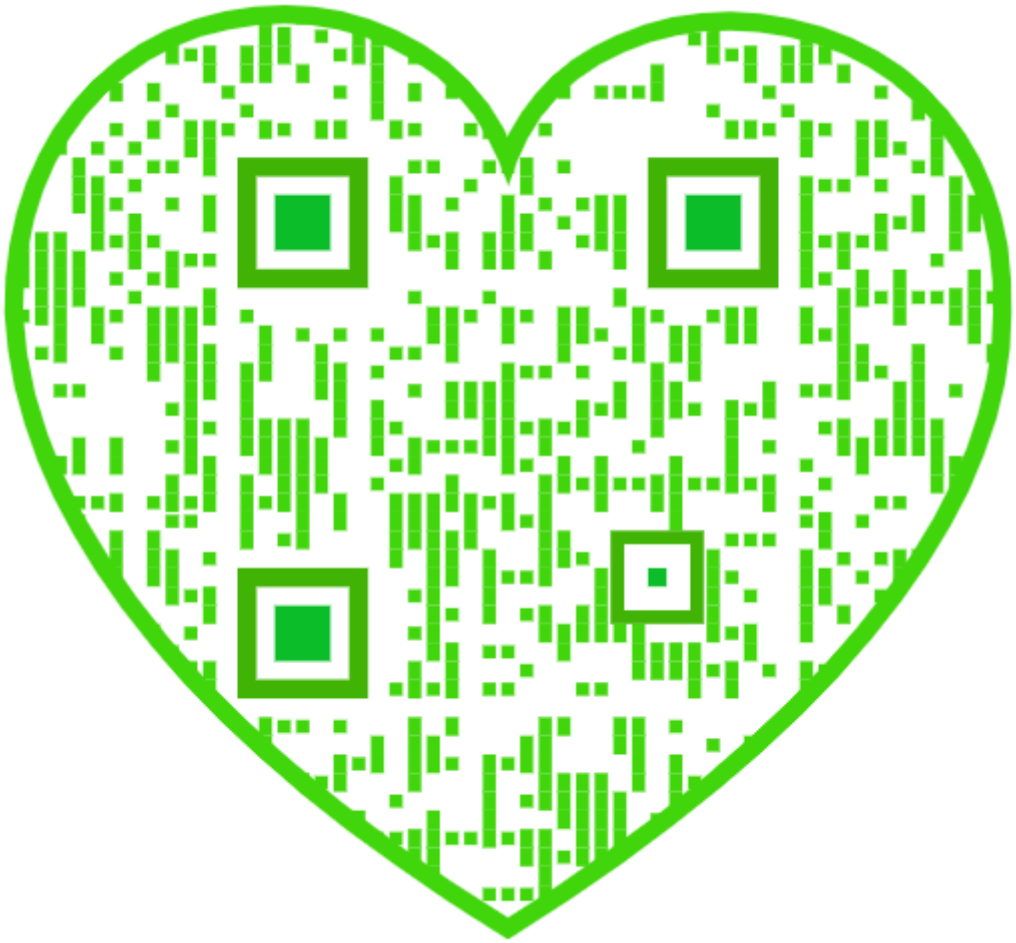

A THEORY OF CONDUCT

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BY

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I.

Introduction.

WITHIN the last few years there has been an unusual interest awakened in moral science. The causes of this are not hard to discover. In the first place, the history of philosophy shows that where a decay of belief in the popular religion is manifested among the more intellectual classes, there is likely to be a demand for something to take the place of the popular religion. This demand is usually supplied by systems of morality which are often merely dogmatic guides for practical life. For example, the philosophy before Socrates, which was chiefly physical,

and the philosophy of the Socratic period, which was mainly metaphysical, were followed by the very practical systems of the Stoics, the Epicureans, and Skeptics, who sought to solve the problem of life and to present a philosophy of character. The systematic philosophy which supplanted the mythology of Greece, the popular creeds associated with the Olympian gods, had in some cases silenced the oracles, in others aroused doubts as to the reality of the heroic and dramatic figures of Homer and Æschylus. The Theogony of Hesiod was at length received with incredulity in later times, and new shrines and forms of worship had to be constructed to take the place of those which no longer attracted their devotees. Just as the pre-Sophistic thinkers had rested unsatisfied with a mythological explanation of Nature, and had set forth a science of the elements or an atomic theory; so the post-Aristotelian thinkers looked askance at oracles and auguries, and applied, ac-

cording to their lights, the methods of science to the conduct of men. It may indeed be said that the successful advance of Christianity was due in some measure to the fact that the Stoic and Epicurean had taught in vain. The gospel addressed to the "weary and heavy laden" spoke to the jaded minds of those whose religion had lost its life, whose philosophy was insufficient.

During the Patristic and Scholastic ages, when the Church supplied the rule of human conduct, and enforced its decrees through the spiritual direction of the priesthood or the force of the civil authority, there was but little disposition toward original ethical inquiry. But with the religious doubts excited at the time of the Reformation came inquiries as to the application of the Christian code of morals; and the seventeenth century is noted for the thorough and able discussions of the Jesuits and other learned writers on practical ethics. The writings of

the Spanish and French casuists furnish a striking example of an attempt to place on a more rational foundation rules of action prescribed by the Church, but subjected to the criticism of the unbeliever.

Ethical reaction in a different form is illustrated by the moral science of Germany during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The dogmatic philosophy which culminated in the system of Wolff did not set forth any original doctrine of ethics. We must of course except Spinoza in making this general statement. But when the period of the *Aufklärung* came, and with it the skepticism with regard to ecclesiastical claims and Scriptural authority, there was a tendency on the part of many to look for principles of action independent of Revelation. Until the publication of Kant's ethical treatises, some were disposed to borrow from abroad what they did not find at home. The Critique of Practical Reason cannot be well understood unless it is re-

membered that the sentimental ethics of Scotland and the sensualistic ethics of France had found a place in many German minds. The ethical development in France, just before the revolution, was itself partly a reaction against the ecclesiasticism which Voltaire and some of his contemporaries had so vigorously and insidiously attacked.

Analogous to such reactionary changes is the ethical movement in Great Britain and Germany at the present time. It is not that this age is generally over-skeptical. On the contrary, it may be doubted whether there was ever a time when the great mass of the people in Europe and America were so effectively interested in religious affairs. This is shown in many ways, — by financial expenditure, by statistics as to the increased membership of orthodox communions, by energy in the support of missions, by a high class of religious literature, and in some countries by a considerable improvement in moral

conduct. But among men of science and letters, among the learned and intellectual classes, there is a very large number of people who have lost either wholly or in part their faith in revealed religion. There are many, for example, who would not be willing to follow Hume's rigorous logic, but are quite ready to pursue the middle way of Agnosticism. There are many who admire the Old Testament for its literary qualities, and the New Testament for its gracious teachings, but who refuse to accept the book of Genesis as a true account of the world's beginning, and the Sermon on the Mount as a code of action. Whether the doctrine of Evolution has been demonstrated to be true or not, — whether it can be reconciled with the traditional creed or not, — one thing seems to be quite certain: the general effect of the teachings of that theory has been prejudicial to religion, in making men disregard the authority of the Church. This has of course been due, to

a very great extent, to the ignorance and imprudence of many who have had religious zeal, but little scientific knowledge. How far men are justified in losing faith in revealed religion in so far as they acquire scientific knowledge is not to be considered here. What must be considered is this, that the advance of natural science by the aid of the evolution-theory has been extraordinary, and has produced a reaction in many minds against what is often called Orthodoxy. This condition of affairs has been aggravated by the development of that historical school which can trace its lineage to Spinoza, and which in this century has found its most radical representatives at Tübingen. In its modified form it has sympathizers in some Protestant theological seminaries. It has the same kind of respect for the Bible that Luther had for the Pope. It is not necessary to estimate here the value of its labors; it is important to notice that the effect of its teaching has been to lessen

the authority and influence of Revelation, and to emphasize the importance of Reason. There are no longer open enemies to Christianity as able as Voltaire and Hume and the doubters of the eighteenth century. But quite as effective opposition to the supremacy of Revelation in matters of faith can be maintained by men who have taken their degree in Divinity. While it is possible, and may be logical, to reject as unworthy of belief certain parts of the teaching of the Scriptures, and yet hold that in them is to be found the essence of ethical doctrine, it cannot be denied that the rejection of any part of Revelation on rational grounds involves the establishment of a principle on which such rejection is made. If the rejected doctrine be ethical, and the principle on which it is rejected ethical, it follows that so far Revelation and ethics are independent. The spread of Agnosticism and of belief in the theory of Evolution has had a positive as well as a

negative effect in the realm of ethics. It is not merely that unbelief in Revelation has been caused by these doctrines; it is that they have furnished a foundation for ethical systems which are held to be in contradiction to those of revealed religion. It is natural, therefore, that those who have been led to doubt that which has been "revealed" should be willing to accept the logical conclusions of that which has given rise to the doubt.

It may be asked, however, Cannot one who believes in the possibility of a rational system of ethics be at the same time a believer in the ethics of Revelation? Is it not possible that the conclusions of science and those of religion will be found to coincide? It may be held that the ethical doctrine founded on Reason is in reality a vindication of the ethics of Revelation, or conversely that Revelation confirms what Reason finds to be true. This point will command our attention elsewhere, and the apparent opposi-

tion beween Reason and Revelation will be noticed. For the present it is sufficient to say that the ethics of Revelation must be absolute, so that a criticism of such ethics from a rational point of view will be in part a criticism of what is called the theory of absolute right, or Intuitionalism.

A glance at the number of important works on moral science which have lately appeared will, we believe, justify the propositions stated above. The history of English ethics during the nineteenth century gives a sufficient proof. The spread of what is popularly known as the utilitarian theory is usually attributed to Jeremy Bentham and his followers, but the theory is as old as systematic ethics themselves. It was Bentham who first stated it boldly.[1] It was found in a more or less explicit form in the doctrines of Hobbes and Hutcheson.

The theory of the earlier Epicureans is

[1] Vol. v. p. 20.

a form of utilitarianism. Socrates and Plato in their doctrine that the General Good was the ethical end were stating the principle of utilitarianism in a partial and illogical way; although Aristotle's view of happiness as something objective can hardly be classified with the doctrines of the school. According to Socrates and to Plato virtue is knowledge of the good. Socrates called it the chief good — Plato more often, the ideal good; but the essence of the good was its utility. This appears distinctly in more than one of the Platonic dialogues, but is directly contradicted in others. The utilitarian theory is a logical result of empiricism, so that John Stuart Mill's ethics was a proper consequence of his psychology as well as a modified form of Bentham's cynical teachings. When Darwin's theory of species and development had been followed by his crude suggestions as to moral doctrine, when Herbert Spencer had shown implicitly by the principles of his Philosophy and Psychol-

ogy that those who accepted his teaching must build up a new system of ethics, there was a natural tendency toward an ethical reaction. Accordingly we find published in rapid succession treatises dealing with all sides of the ethical problem: judicial works like that of Professor Sidgwick, orthodox and conservative works like that of Dr. Martineau, evolutionary works like those of Mr. Spencer and Mr. Leslie Stephen, works imbued with the spirit and method of the absolute philosophy like those of Mr. Bradley and Mr. Green. It is not too much to say that the writings just referred to are the most valuable contributions to the literature of ethical science which this century has produced. Some of them have been expressions of radical doctrine, while some owe their origin to the controversy which that radical doctrine has excited. Those which bear distinctly the marks of German thought have been more or less inspired by the teaching of Fichte and Hegel.

It is my purpose to discuss as concisely as possible some of the more important principles which are the foundation of all moral science, and it is my hope that I may be able in setting aside much that is false, to arrive at conclusions which are beyond doubt. It is also my purpose to notice briefly the harmony of moral science and revealed religion. Moral conduct involves generally two things: 1. A standard of Morality. 2. Volition. Where the volition is in agreement with the standard the action is moral or right. Where it is in disagreement, the action is immoral or wrong. There are indifferent actions, however, but these are in reality right actions. The test of an indifferent action is not that its performance is not wrong, but that its non-performance is as right as its performance. It will be admitted on all sides that, if there be a moral science, there must be a moral standard. This standard may or may not be absolute and ultimate. If it be absolute and ulti-

mate it is unnecessary to analyze it or to attempt its analysis into simple elements. If it be neither absolute nor ultimate, one has a right to inquire what its nature may be. One has a right to ask what makes the standard of right. It is possible to explain without analyzing even an absolute standard. For example, without attempting to unfold the nature of rightness, one may say that the standard is fixed by an authority such as the will of God; or by an immutable principle according to which God directs his will and wills that man should act. But in these cases there is no higher court to which appeal can be made. The question Why is this absolutely right? can be answered only by saying, Because God wills it or because it is in agreement with an immutable principle. Refuge cannot be taken in the proposition that right is what is in accordance with the "eternal fitness of things," for the term "fitness" becomes the object of inquiry, and fitness must mean rightness or else the principle of Right is not absolute and ultimate.

But the standard of morality may be regarded as something relative or derived. It may be said that right actions are right because they are beneficent, because they tend to improve the condition of society, to advance its interests, and so to promote its happiness. It may be said that rightness will then vary according to the conditions of society, so that what is right under some circumstances may be wrong under others. Morality from such a point of view has no absolute meaning, and may be shown to be derived from certain non-moral principles, such as sentiment, self-love, or custom and habit. It is the problem of the scientific moralist who rejects the theory of an absolute right to explain the meaning and derivation of the relative right which is the standard of Moral Action. This makes a large part of moral inquiry an analysis of the term "ought." We *ought* to do what is right? Right is what we *ought* to do. What ought to be done is a question which can be answered

in two general ways. It may be said the right ought to be done, and the right is ultimate; or the right ought to be done, right being that which derives its rightness from certain consequences.

If a conclusion be reached as to the nature of right, one is forced to inquire, How can that which is right be known? Is right correlate with knowledge, or with feeling, or with both? Is right something of which I become aware by the rise of certain emotions, or is its reality determined by an act of knowledge, or do both knowledge and emotion combine to inform me? Several answers to these questions have been given. For the present I may leave the subject to consider generally the second main object of ethical inquiry which is volition. Every moral action is voluntary. But every act of volition is complex. It implies a motive according to which the volition is made. It implies the action of the will itself, and the end of the action. As it will be necessary hereafter to dis-

cuss the exact relation of the motive to the will, it is well here to define the terms just used.

The motive may be said to consist of that state of mind which is the immediate occasion of the will's acting in a certain way. It will be found that every act of the will involves an act of knowledge and a desire. The act of knowledge causes the desire. Two men may each have the same knowledge at a given moment, yet the desires awakened by such knowledge may be different. Motive, therefore, should properly comprehend not merely the knowledge and the desire, but what is called character. It is customary, however, to regard the character as independent, and to confine the term "motive" to some impulse, or affection, or desire. But it will be seen that this obscures the important fact that the impulse or desire is so closely connected with the character of the person who wills, that the direction of the will in most cases may be said to depend

on the character. This may be explained by an illustration. Here are two men, A. and B. To follow a certain course of action is suggested by worldly considerations, such as ambition, enjoyment of ease, love of power. The same course of action lies open to each; the same object appeals to each. In the case of A. the motive of ambition is stronger than the motive to do right. Why is this? The only explanation to be found is in A.'s character; for the same object is before B. The motives so called are not real motives, but only tendencies. B. prefers to follow a moral course of action, because his desire to be moral is stronger than other desires. And why? The only explanation to be found is in B.'s character. It will be suspected by some that this is urged to support a doctrine of the Freedom of the Will; but a later chapter will doubtless dispel such an impression. The end of voluntary action is not the motive, but usually excites the desire which moves

the will. These general suggestions I have made before beginning an analysis of moral principles.

The importance of such an analysis as I have just suggested is self-evident. It has been often observed that false morality — that is, morality founded on false principles — is more dangerous than actual immorality. The justification, on supposed moral principles, of wrong actions, is far more dangerous to the individual and to society than the performance of immoral actions which are admitted or recognized as such. And it may be learned from history how often false systems of ethics have first corrupted society and then led it to martyrdom.

II.

The Theory of Right.

Two distinct questions present themselves in connection with the theory of right, which I shall now attempt to answer: —

1. What is the nature of right?
2. How is right known?

It is not necessary to discuss the etymology of the term. Right is the contradictory of wrong, but is not the contradictory of bad. Right is what is morally good. The great fault of ancient ethics, and of a great part of modern ethics, as many know, consists in the failure to distinguish between what is right and what is good. The dialogues of Plato abound in examples of this confusion. The punishment of a criminal, for example, may in some instances be bad for him. It may

cause him pain. It may harden instead of reforming him. It may put his family in distress. The rightness of punishing him depends on some legal, and ultimately on some moral principle.

What the nature of this principle is forms a most important question in ethics. The theory which is ordinarily called the theory of consequences makes the morality of conduct depend primarily on the results of conduct. The result of moral conduct is happiness. The result of immoral conduct is unhappiness. There is a difference of opinion as to the extent of happiness or unhappiness so involved. According to some it is the happiness or unhappiness of self which is in question; according to others it is the happiness of others. In one case we have what is known as Egoism; in the other what is known as Altruism. The theories are often described as egoistic and altruistic Hedonism. In both of them morality is primarily objective. The result, not

the motive, of conduct must be considered in order that the morality of the conduct may be estimated. To murder a man is wrong, because murder results in unhappiness; and so murderous motives are wrong, because they tend to cause murderous conduct. If happiness were the result of murderous conduct, and if unhappiness were produced by not murdering, then murder would be right and murderous motives would be right. To take human life in order to promote my own happiness is to act morally if I am an Egoist. To take it in order to promote the happiness of others is to act morally if I am an Altruist. In this way it is argued that the execution of criminals, the taking of life in war, the taking of life in self-defense, are actions which cannot be judged of *per se*, but are to be judged from the amount of happiness or unhappiness which results from them.

From this point of view, in judging of conduct, the motive has a moral value only

in so far as it influences, or tends to influence, the action. If I perform a benevolent action from motives of vanity, and that action is conducive to happiness, then my conduct is moral. It cannot, according to our premises, be said that the motive is immoral because the consequences of the act produce happiness, and the motives of vanity produce, and tend to produce, the act. If it be said that such motives are moral in so far as they produce beneficent acts, but are immoral because they injure the character and corrupt society, it follows that our definition of conduct must be modified, — that it includes something more than motive, act, and end.

According to the theory of consequences, the performance of an action detrimental to the happiness of self or of others is immoral, no matter what the character of the motive may be. It is no justification, then, of murder, or theft, or any interference with happiness, that it is committed with a good motive. However

good and pure the motive may be, the consequences of its influence are the tests of the moral conduct which it affects.

The other general theory opposed to that of consequences is the theory that the rightness or wrongness of actions is to be judged primarily by the motive, and only secondarily by the consequences. It is said *fiat justitia ruat cœlum.* Now it would manifestly be a most unhappy condition of affairs were the heavens to fall. According to the advocate of the theory of consequences, it would be plain that justice had not been done were the catastrophe to happen. But to one who adopts the doctrine that the consequences are not the primary tests of moral conduct, it is quite possible that there should be unhappy consequences following a course of moral conduct. It may be remarked, however, that this pessimistic view is rare, and the position of Kant is ordinarily taken that there is an agreement between morality and happiness, so that to follow

the one insures the other. If this view of what may be called intrinsic morality be adopted, there can be no such thing as casuistry. It can never be right to lie, because lying is intrinsically wrong. If it be said there are circumstances in which lying is right, there are occasions in which doing wrong is justified, and becomes right by reason of the consequences, then we abandon the position just referred to, and are taking up the theory of consequences. There are very few men in our time, however, who are willing to follow this theory of right to its logical conclusions. Those who do so are usually looked upon as foolish or fanatical, while the social and legal sanctions are here in disagreement with the moral sanction.

For if the consequences justify the supposed bad action, it is impossible to deny that the more serious the consequences anticipated from doing right, the more inadvisable it becomes that the right should be done. It is conceivable that the stand-

ard of right would then vary with the estimate made by moral agents as to the probable consequences.

In looking generally at these two theories of right, it must be affirmed, with Bentham, that *happiness* is the end of all human action. It is the prime motive. It is generally admitted that the conduct of all men is consciously directed toward the attainment of happiness. One may go further and say that the conduct of each man is naturally directed toward the attainment of his own happiness. This proposition is different from the proposition that each man ought so to direct his conduct. The selfishness which, according to writers like Hobbes, and La Rochefoucauld, and Helvétius, is the spring of all action is so common that it has led many to confound what is with what ought to be. If morality were something which would bring unhappiness, and if the road to happiness were the pursuit of immoral ends, no man would care to do what is

right. What does it signify that I break every rule of morality provided that I am happier from so doing? If you say you may be happy now, but eventually pain and remorse will take the place of your present enjoyment, you contradict the proposition with which we set out. We are accustomed to say that "in the end" a virtuous course of conduct will bring happiness. We endure present pains or inconveniences, we make present self-sacrifices, as means to the furtherance of future and permanent happiness. Even those who sacrifice health, or life, or fortune for others — even martyrs who have forsaken a life of ease, and who have languished in prisons or burned at the stake — have had their eyes fixed on an eternity of joy which would be lost to them were they not to welcome the immediate pain. I affirm, then, that if there be disagreement between happiness and morality, it is useless to attempt to persuade men to be moral. If a man be persuaded

that adultery, and murder, and theft are the means to eternal happiness, he will follow them in spite of any immutable principle or the still small voice of conscience. It is useless to tell such a man of the beauty of virtue, of the nobility of self-sacrifice, of the intrinsic rightness of generosity and kindness, if he believes that the exercise of such qualities will make him unhappy; then he will prefer happiness to virtue, whether he be a sinner or a saint. But, as I said above, there are few who take so pessimistic a view, and men have been accustomed to regard virtuous conduct as the means to the highest and most permanent happiness. So close has this identification of the two become, that one school of morals affirms the test of moral conduct to be the quantity of happiness which it brings. The most logical supporters of this theory consider that the conduct which we should call moral is that which produces the maximum of happiness, irrespective of the

quality of that happiness; and, conversely, immoral conduct tends to produce unhappiness. The only reason why one kind of happiness should be sought rather than another (in so far as the ethical aspect of the matter is concerned) is on account of its greater intensity or more enduring character. As soon as we admit a difference in the quality of pleasures, the theory of "happiness" as the test of morality is abandoned. All pleasures must be regarded as having the same ethical value. This was the position taken by Bentham, and its modification by John Stuart Mill was inconsistent with the latter's utilitarianism. For as soon as we admit a difference of moral quality in different kinds of happiness, we are obliged to ask why one kind is more moral than another, and thus set up a standard of morality other than the utilitarian. We have no right, then, to say that the pleasure of a man who is enjoying the delight of good eating and drinking is morally inferior to

that of a man whose philanthropic soul is elated at seeing paupers warmed, and clothed, and fed, unless it can be shown that the latter pleasure is more intense or more lasting than the first. Both intensity and permanence depend, as will be seen, very largely on the character of the man.

The prevailing tendency in the field of ethics is to reject Egoism and to advocate the altruistic theory. Moral conduct is that which produces the greatest happiness, not of self alone, but of the greatest number. What has been said above, however, with regard to the possible disagreement of happiness and moral conduct is applicable here. It is impossible to persuade men to seek after the happiness of others unless they are convinced that such conduct will secure their own happiness. An amiable man is one who derives happiness in viewing the welfare of others; a malevolent man is one who does not. It is important, therefore, to

remember that altruism cannot *per se* be a theory of morals which is practically valid, unless it be dependent on a theory of egoism. For example, I say to Mr. A.: Do what is right. He asks, What is right? I reply, Act so as to secure the greatest happiness of the greatest number. He may answer, But why should I do that? Now if I say, Because it is a law of God, or a law of conscience, or according to the eternal fitness of things, that you should so act, it is apparent that I abandon my theory of utilitarianism. If I say, Your nature is benevolent enough to answer your question, Mr. A. may say to me, — thereby showing a most unpleasant side of his character, — I am not a benevolent man. I do not care what becomes of society so long as I am happy myself. The happiness of society, or what is often called the social organism, is the happiness of a collection of men. Some of them Mr. A. may care a great deal about: if he cares enough about them to

sacrifice his own happiness to theirs, he doubtless finds a recompense for his self-denial. It is irrelevant to say that he has, by his self-denial, set aside his own happiness. The fact that he acts as he does shows that he contemplates greater happiness from his action than if he refrained and enjoyed immediate happiness. This aspect of conduct will be noticed more fully when the reasons why one should be moral are discussed. I am disposed to emphasize this relation which exists between Egoism and Altruism. For it cannot be denied that the advocates of the latter, as well as those who deny both Egoism and Altruism, have encouraged what one might almost describe as hypocrisy in their dealing with the motives of conduct. A man who conducts his actions in order to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number would not do so unless he believed that such conduct would promote his own happiness. Such a course of action may give

him immediate pain, and may involve the suffering on his part of future pain; but unless he believed that it would insure him on the whole a greater amount of pleasure than of pain, he would not seek the happiness of others at the expense of his own happiness. It is indeed difficult to understand why the term self-denial should be applied to conduct which gives up immediate pleasure for the sake of pleasure in the future. To gratify one's desire to be benevolent, to act according to the sympathies of one's nature, to satisfy the intense longing that a man has to do good to those whom he loves, is not, scientifically speaking, self-denial at all. If I am a Sybarite, self-denial does not consist in preferring ease and the enjoyment of the good things of this life to sacrifice of these things for others. But if I am born with what men call a great and unselfish heart, if I am of a sympathetic nature, if I feel remorse and shame at neglecting the happiness of others, even

though I love the immediate pleasures of life, I shall be a Sybarite unless I desire to benefit others. The act of benefiting others is clearly a following of my own interest. It is not self-denial. What the immediate gratification of the appetites is to the Sybarite, the furtherance of the welfare of others is to the benevolent man.

It would appear from what has been said, then, that I am identifying moral conduct with conduct in the interest of self, but this is not strictly true. It is one thing to say that all moral conduct promotes the happiness of self. One may go further and affirm that moral conduct is followed because it promotes the happiness of self. But it does not follow that all conduct which promotes the happiness of self is moral. We have to ask whether conduct promotes happiness because it is moral, or whether it is moral because it promotes happiness. There is undoubtedly a distinction between different kinds of happi-

ness, a distinction which men generally recognize even if its scientific validity be questioned.

For example, a higher moral quality is assigned to the happiness which comes from satisfying desires of an æsthetic and philanthropic kind than those which come from the gratification of the appetites of the body. But independent of the distinction between moral and immoral pleasure or happiness is a recognized distinction between right and wrong apart from the happiness involved in conduct. It is held that what is right means something more than what is expedient or useful, and we are referred to certain broad and generally accepted propositions, such as: It is wrong to harm the innocent, the purity of woman should be respected, it is wrong to steal. It is conceivable that a man should think it right to steal, should steal without being found out, in which case nobody's happiness would be affected except his own, and he would not necessarily be unhappy be-

cause no remorse would follow the deed by which he acquired property. It is conceivable that a man should kill another who had not wronged him, but who he might suppose had wronged him, who was generally supposed by others to have wronged him, and society and law might assent to the act, the wrongness of which was not to be measured by the happiness produced. As a matter of fact, society passes judgment as to the rightness or wrongness of actions without considering the happiness involved. Men have been led to affirm that there exists an absolute right or wrong which no circumstances can alter.

Now I believe that the whole difficulty with regard to the nature of right is diminished if we recognize the agreement between what is right and what brings happiness, in so far as to affirm that what is right tends to promote happiness of a more enduring kind than what is wrong does. We undoubtedly in many cases recognize the right by the happiness which

follows its performance. According to some, our ideas with regard to duty and the moral code which is generally accepted among civilized nations are a result of long experience. It has been found that certain general ways of action promote the general happiness more than others. These we call moral, and embody the results of experience in our customs or laws, in our social and moral rules, even in our religion. What is right, therefore, is determined by the custom or habit of the people. There is no general recognition of an absolute right or wrong; the customary morality of Patagonia or Borneo is not the morality of England or Ireland. What is right in one country may be wrong in another. What is right in one century is wrong in another. This doctrine is reinforced by the discrepancy often noticed between the social and legal sanctions, or between the moral and religious sanction. Much light is thrown on this subject by inquiring into the theory of obligation and the manner in which

moral truth is known. For the present I would suggest that the theory which denies the existence of absolute morality must show why it is that while the general rules of morality accepted by one nation are undoubtedly promotive of happiness, those of another nation are quite the contrary. Those who believe that there is an absolute right usually hold that it is universally and intuitively known. The utilitarian advances against this theory the very fact which he cannot explain in his own — the variety of moral judgments. If the ideas of morality prevalent in what we call civilized society are merely a growth, why have they not grown in uncivilized society? If these ideas are intuitive, why do the institutions of the Thug or the Dervish differ from those of an English clergyman? An attempt is sometimes made to show that Right means what is fitting; and that the moral ideal in man is analogous to the ideal with respect to ordinary objects. A good man is one who is adapted to his sur-

roundings, just as a good knife cuts well, or a good house is comfortable and lasting. This attempt is a mere evasion of the question, which may be put thus: Why is a moral man adapted to his surroundings, or, as we are sometimes prosily told, fitted to fulfill the end of his being? Is it because he is happier? If so, we are utilitarians. Is it because he is conforming to some principle of fitness? If so, we are no nearer an explanation than before. The ordinary supporter of the ethics of Mr. Darwin's school finds fault with the doctrine of Absolute Morality, because it does not take into account the growth of man in adaptation to his surroundings or "environment." The advocate of the Absolute theory may complain that no standard is furnished by the Evolutionist to test the adaptation of conduct to surroundings. Why is it more moral to be adapted to one's surroundings than not to be so adapted? A country gentleman with a good digestion, an active liver, a warm-

hearted generosity, is well adapted to his surroundings. It is no trouble for him to keep his temper, his needs are well supplied, and he is charitable to his neighbors. Is he a more moral man than the missionary who makes his family weep by taking his departure to the coast of Africa to speak for a while to unappreciative negroes and suffer martyrdom like One whose teaching he proclaims?

If Right be a growth, the result of development, we may inquire, Where did the idea come from — what was its genesis? The term evidently is applied, as I have said, to that which one ought to do. Now, however men may differ as to *what* they ought to do, however they may differ as to the absolute character of right, they agree substantially as to the existence of duty or obligation. We are led to inquire, then, How can we know what we ought to do? There are two general theories as to the knowledge of moral distinctions. The first of these may be called

1. The *a priori*, or intuitional view.
2. The *a posteriori*, or empirical view.

Neither of these I regard as wholly satisfactory, but they may be stated as follows: —

The intuitional theory of knowledge maintains the absolute character of Right and Wrong. This absolute Right and Wrong is known intuitively, consequently the knowledge is uniform, or should be uniform. The problem of the intuitionist is to explain the diversity of moral judgments among men. There is no moral proposition as to conduct universally accepted by all men, unless it be that men should do their duty. So soon as the question is asked, "What is my duty?" a variety of answers is given. The variety is explained by the intuitionist in various ways. Men are perverted, according to him, in their judgment as to right and wrong. But no adequate explanation is offered as to why this perversion is possible. It is said that morality is so often

opposed to one's apparent interest and appetite that the feelings have undermined the judgment, just as a lover may overlook the faults of the woman whom he loves, or the partisan in politics may regard the demagogue as a statesman. If this be so, then the moral judgment cannot be an intuitive judgment. Intuitive judgments are necessary, and it is inconceivable that non-essential propositions should overbalance necessary judgments. The apparent conflict between morality and self-interest may be referred to in order to explain immoral actions, but is in no way sufficient to explain judgments which contradict so-called necessary truths.

A favorite form of intuitionism may be noticed as affording an illustration of what has just been said. There is said to be a judgment as to the morality of individual actions or states of mind concerning which rightness or wrongness is predicated; for example: "Murder is wrong," "Selfishness is wrong," "Charity is right." The

subject of the moral judgment is gained from experience. But all moral or immoral actions involve some principle. This principle is known intuitively by the Reason. If there is an agreement between the fact of experience and the moral principle, we are able to predicate rightness of the event; if there is disagreement, we predicate the contrary, just as we compare the reckoning about concrete objects in arithmetic with the general axioms on which our reckoning is based, and just as we refer successive events to the principle of causality.

Without disputing the psychological correctness of this theory, I would point out the fact that it fails altogether to explain the diversity of moral judgments. Men make mistakes in counting, but when the rules of reckoning are explained to them the necessity of those rules is recognized. In the same way, it may be said, the savage may be civilized and made to appreciate the fact that he should not steal; but the necessity of the principle that the theft

is wrong is altogether different from the necessity that four is more than two, or that twice five are ten. We conclude that the light of reason or of nature does not give an immediate or intuitive knowledge of moral truth.

The advocate of the *a posteriori* school advances at this point and offers the explanation of the diversity of moral judgments among men, which we have already had occasion to notice and to criticise.

We are confronted, then, with the following problems: If the idea of right is simply the result of what men have found to be conducive to happiness, why do we regard morality as something obligatory instead of something merely expedient? If, on the other hand, the knowledge of Right is necessary, why is it not universal? I believe that the science of ethics furnishes no answer to the question "What is Right?" But this does not imply that there is no absolute right. On the contrary, it seems highly probable that such a right

exists, on account of the universal prevalence of the idea of Duty. The science of ethics thus reveals no definite ideal except that of Happiness as the goal of human conduct. It tells us that there is a right which we ought to regard as the ideal, but what that right is it does not reveal. Men are at sea without a compass on a starless night; they are bound for a port which they cannot find; which is not on their charts, for it is still undiscovered. If they can but avoid shipwreck and reach any shore, they have done all that is possible, and must be content to know, after they come to anchor, whether they have been brought into their desired haven.

III.

The Nature of Duty.

In the foregoing chapter the conclusion was reached that man does not know what he ought to do, but that he ought to do something; that is, that there is such a thing as duty, and that it is an universally prevalent idea. The conception of duty or obligation is either original or derived. Those who affirm that duty is not an original conception may be asked to explain its origin, and attempts have been made to furnish such an explanation. All theories upon this point may be fairly and conveniently divided into two classes:—

1. The objective theory.
2. The subjective theory.

1. The first of these regards duty as a product of law, and law as the product of fear and ultimately of expediency. This

conclusion has been presented with great force by some who have applied the hypothesis of evolution to the explanation of ethical doctrine. Without going further back in development than the beginning of human history, it may be said that the idea of *ought* comes from the idea of *must:* so that moral obligation is an idea the source of which is to be found in social and legal obligation. The authority of the parent over the child has given rise to the idea that the commands of the former are binding upon the latter. The unquestioned commands of early years become part and parcel of the rule which guides the child until in more mature years another rule of action is prescribed by the society in which the man lives, and the sanctions of the law bind him to courses of action which society regards as right, and deter him from actions which he regards as wrong. The rule changes, but the conception of duty remains. The law may be a law of love in family life, a law of sympathy or interest

in social life, a law of fear in civil life, but the habitual restraint of earlier periods becomes the imperative "duty" of maturity. This theory fails to account for the authority of the parent, of society, of the law, except on the basis of love and fear. The child may obey the parent from love, and obey the law from fear. But suppose that on reaching maturity a question arises, "Ought I to obey my father or obey the law?" the *ought* would appear to be an idea independent of both parent and law. Or, if it be said that sympathy or benevolence is the origin of duty, the question arises, Why does man have to ask "*ought* I to be sympathetic toward this man or that; *ought* I to feel this benevolence"? It is highly probable, if not absolutely certain, that the question of duty is antecedent to the question of love or fear. But it may be said, the fact is that certain acts are expedient and others inexpedient, and it may be asked, Is not expediency the source of duty? But if it be possible to ask the

question, Is it or is it not my duty to do what is expedient? then the idea of duty is logically antecedent to that of expediency.

2. The origin of duty, however, may be said to be subjective, and to be found in self-interest. Just as it is to my interest to obey the law, to respect the mandates of society, and the authority of my parents; so the apprehension of this fact raises in me the idea of duty, because my own self-interest is evidently the most important interest with which I am concerned. To this the reply may be made that in this case self-interest and duty should not only always coincide, but that they should seem to coincide. This we know is very far from being the case. Even where the agreement between self-interest and duty is apprehended, so that one cannot ask, Ought I to follow self-interest? so certainly is the answer affirmative, it is plain that the very affirmation, It is my duty to seek my own interest,

implies a conception of duty not derived from self-interest but independent of it. I am willing to admit that self-interest cannot be resolved into any simpler elements, that egoism is a necessary quality of the human mind, but the history of society shows very plainly that duty too is necessary. Let us take an interesting example and consider the ethical position of an oriental devotee, who does not believe in a happy immortality but expects eternal annihilation. Such an one will inflict horrible tortures upon his body, because he thinks such torture is demanded by his duty. According to the doctrine of the foregoing chapter, he would not inflict the torture unless he desired to do it, and so far his motive is egoistic. But the immediate thought before his mind is the thought of duty. He inflicts the torture, not because he loves the torture, but because he loves his duty. While he loves duty more than the torture, he does not love duty more than he does himself, be-

cause his self-interest impels him to do his duty, and to do his duty is to him desirable. Self-love, or egoism, is a far broader conception than that of duty, because it includes the conception of all acts which are not morally obligatory and yet are performed for the happiness of self. But duty is independent of egoism. For even if it be claimed that all moral conduct is egoistic, it must be borne in mind that egoistic conduct is only, the content of duty and not a necessary part of the conception of duty as such. One may believe it to be his duty to help others at his own inconvenience, and may refuse to do his duty. Another may believe it to be his duty to work for his own interest, and he may seem to decline to work for his own interest. Rightly or wrongly, we separate between duty and egoistic conduct. But as I have already said, the moment I ask the perfectly rational question, Ought I to be selfish? I have thrown into jeopardy the subjective theory of the derivation of duty.

The conception of obligation is necessary. Just as the laws of space and time and of causality are necessary conditions of mathematical and natural science, so the law of duty is a necessary condition of ethical science. That I ought to do my duty is a necessary proposition. The content of duty is various and accidental. Accordingly we find egoism or altruism or religion filling the empty form. Duty will lead one into the temple of Venus, another into the monastery; in one nation it will make the mother sacrifice her own life for her child, in another to cast the child into the sacred river; in one nation it will secure the condemnation of vice and crime, in another it will make them objects of worship. Like some mysterious oracle, it calls on men to act and does not tell them what to do.

It will be seen at once, by any one familiar with the Critical Philosophy, that the conclusion I have reached with regard to the nature of obligation is in some

respects analogous to the Kantian doctrine as to synthetic judgments *a priori*. The judgment of what it is our duty to do is an *a posteriori* judgment. The judgment that conduct is related to duty as being right or wrong is an *a priori* judgment. It is impossible to conceive of conduct which is not either wrong or not wrong, but there may be a variety of conclusions reached as to what is wrong and what is not wrong. An illustration of the principle of causality will make this doctrine of duty still plainer. A certain change in nature is observed. What the cause of that change may be is not known, but investigation may reveal the cause, and yet different investigators may reach different conclusions as to what produced the change. That there was a cause for the change requires no demonstration. The fact that there was a cause is a necessary truth. A terrific explosion occurs and a building is found in ruins. The police attribute the shock to dynamite; some think that it was due to the weak-

ness of the boiler, others to gunpowder; the proprietor explains that it came from the carelessness of the engineer who had charge of the boiler. He reaches the conclusion empirically, and shows empirically that other explanations of the disaster are unfounded, but in every case reference was made to the principle of causality which forbade the idea that the disaster was uncaused. A man kills another. At once the question is asked, Was the killing right or wrong? Opinions differ. Some say he did right, others that he did wrong, and no decision is reached. All recognize the fact when it is brought to their notice that the action was either right or not right. The form of *duty* is referred to just as in the purely intellectual case the form of *causality* is referred to. This I conceive to be the relation subsisting between the *That* and the *What* of morality. If it be admitted, however, that duty exists, it becomes important to determine what one's duty is, and here it is that experience comes to our

aid, and the question may be discussed, What shall we do? Here, too, is to be applied once more the doctrine already noticed, that there must be an agreement between morality and happiness in order to insure the performance of moral conduct. The term duty, then, is to be applied to an *a priori* form of knowledge. The *a posteriori* knowledge of which that form is the condition is a product of experience. Unless men are Pessimists it must be held that there is an agreement between morality and happiness. It is reasonable to conclude that the conduct which results in the greatest amount of happiness is the most moral conduct, *i. e.*, is conduct which we ought to follow.

Such a theory as that which I have just suggested raises the same question with regard to the form of the moral judgment which is raised with regard to other necessary forms of judgment. It raises the old issue between the *a priori* and *a posteriori* schools of philosophy, Can we explain

necessary truth by means of experience? Experience is ultimately an appeal to the senses, and it must be shown empirically that what we call the form of obligation or duty has its origin in the ordinary perceptions of the five senses, or in the more intimate sensations of pleasure and pain. The utter dissimilarity between sensations such as color and sound and touch make the explanation of the idea of duty from these even more uncertain than the explanation of causality or space or time from such impressions. The utter independence of pleasurable conduct and conduct which ought to be performed, in the mature mind, render it extremely improbable that what is pleasurable has given rise to the idea of duty. Such a result could be traced only by a patient following of the development of mind from its earliest stages, even if those stages belong to forms of primitive organic existence. How far this can be done is very uncertain. It seems to me that the most important question that the

theory of knowledge presents to us is the question whether necessary truth can be shown not to be ultimate. So far no theory of the evolution of morality has given any definite account of the origin of moral obligation. Of the development of judgments as to right and wrong we have many accounts, but the formation of a moral judgment about anything implies the form of oughtness as the logical condition without which the moral judgment, whether mistaken or not, could not be framed.

IV.

The Nature of Character.

THE evidence of the nature of Character is to be determined by experience. A man forms a judgment with respect to his own character by reviewing his past thoughts and actions; he estimates the character of his fellow-men by inferences from their expressions of thought. In modern ethical science the place of character has acquired great importance, especially in connection with the doctrine of the will. For example, when the determinist, in defending his position, argues that the will is governed by motives which are beyond the control of the agent, it is affirmed on the contrary by the advocates of freedom that the effect of the motives is conditioned by the character, and that character determines the will. Character

becomes in this way more or less identified with the person of a man, with his real self. We speak, for example, of a person not merely having, but being, a bad character. Let us suppose, for example, the case of a man whose desire is excited toward some object which he feels that he ought not to possess. The immorality of the pleasurable conduct which is suggested to him is weighed in comparison with the morality of the painful conduct. Now it is argued that the motives alone are not sufficient to determine his conduct, but that character conditions the determination. The problem, then, is to explain character; to show its origin. If we take the empirical view of the matter, the states of mind antecedent to the action of the will are causes of the will's action, and we are not at liberty to introduce any third something, such as character or ego, to condition the effect of the motive. For the ego is not given empirically, and in that case character is either wholly or in part

unknown, or becomes simply a series of phenomena. A man's character is an inconstant something, changing with the change of phenomena. Abandoning, however, the metaphysical view of character as related to self, we may notice its ethical significance. A character which is morally good is one which has a tendency to effect right actions. Our estimate of what constitutes a good character will therefore vary according to the standard of morality adopted. For example, if we hold that the happiness of others is the standard of conduct, then a good character means one which tends to promote such happiness.

It happens, however, that either by personal experience or training civilized people are in agreement generally as to the actions which are called moral, and we need not introduce at this point a discussion as to the moral standard. One or two illustrations may serve to make clear the conclusion which I am about to draw.

Let us suppose, in the first place, the case of a person who is born among criminals and trained to look upon moral obliquity as praiseworthy. He is educated so that he lives by theft, he is punished by the law, he is hardened by association with convicts, and is an outcast from society. The general tendency of his life is bad, and if he does right it is from the worst of motives. We say of such an one, his character is bad.

Let us suppose the case of one born amid moral and religious surroundings, and throughout his early life warned and guarded against the "world, the flesh, and the devil;" educated to respect the property, the feelings, of others. We say of such an one, his character is good.

Let us suppose, however, that to the two men the same temptation comes; for example, the commission of a murder to gain some important end. The former commits it on account of his surroundings having been so bad as to make him look

with but little horror on the awful consequences of taking human life. The second man resists the temptation because he has been differently trained. It is evident that the character here has a controlling influence in determining the man's actions; but character has been modified by circumstances. If these be regarded for the present as typical cases, we may ask, Why did not the bad man resist the evil surroundings in time to make his character good enough to avoid committing the murder? We may ask in like manner, Why did not the good man resist the bad surroundings, and why did he reach a stage of demoralization which made him succumb to the temptation to murder? If such a condition of things was not possible, it follows that character is made good or bad by the surroundings of a man; and if this be so he cannot, according to his character, resist the influence of that which makes his character what it is. If we take the other alternative, then there is a char-

acter with which a man is born which determines whether he is able to resist evil influences. And here it seems to me we have presented to us a subject of surpassing importance and difficulty in the science of ethics. I am anxious in discussing it to avoid, as far as possible, needless opposition to doctrines not essential to the point to be noticed. For this purpose I am ready to admit, for the sake of argument, that the will is free, and that motives induce, but do not compel, the agent to conduct himself in such and such a way. Here is the solemn truth, however, which meets every one who observes human conduct. Every man or woman who comes into the world comes "not in entire forgetfulness and not in utter nakedness." No mind is a *tabula rasa,* which begins its career on the day when the body is born. No nervous system which belongs to an infant body is isolated and distinct from the lives which have preceded it. On the contrary, every child expresses the result,

the last effect, of a long — one may almost say an infinite — series of causes. The parents and grandparents, many generations of parents, may be known, but who can tell through what these ancestors have passed? It is possible, and indeed almost certain, that in the long line of progenitors which aristocrat and pauper alike possess, there have been here and there men of low, mean disposition; there have been men whose character seemed an emanation from hell; men addicted to nameless crimes, to debauchery, to cruelty. There are those whose forefathers have been drunkards, or insane, or convicted felons. I am disposed to think that heirlooms of this kind are seldom wholly lost, for we can see how hereditary characteristics are perpetuated until they are stamped indelibly not only on families, but on races. There is a deep physiological and psychological truth in the old-fashioned doctrine of original sin, and it is a serious fact to contemplate. It is impossible to tell when

a boy or girl is born what particular tendency may be lurking in his or her mind or body potentially, ready to spring up on some occasion being offered, and bring desolation and ruin. And if the hypothesis of Darwin be true, and our ancestry is not limited to the human species, one cannot say definitely that qualities belonging to the brutes have not left indelible marks upon our own highly perfected organisms. If such a view be regarded as fantastical, it is sufficient for us to notice how habits descend in families, even where the surroundings of the children differ from those of the parents. If the natural history of many of those who fill our asylums and prisons were studied, it would be found that the causes of these wandering minds and vicious lives were not independent of hereditary influences. The side of these facts which is most often noticed is the serious warning it gives to those about to marry to see to it that they do not knowingly perpetuate corruption in the phy-

sique and morals of their children. But to my mind the more serious aspect is that which belongs to the possible moral training of those who have inherited the trammels and vices which in many cases have wrecked the lives of their ancestors. It becomes a matter of vital importance to determine whether, if morality be largely dependent on character, and if one's character be an inheritance which one's life simply wastes or puts out at interest, — whether, I say, ethical science can furnish a moral code at all and insist that it should be obeyed.

Whether, then, we adopt the doctrine of freedom or not, it cannot be denied that every man is born with certain inherited dispositions or tendencies, which are more or less eradicable, according to the strength of their persistence and the force of circumstances. And it is an encouragement to the social reformer that in many cases men have not only been raised to a high plane of morality when their birth and sur-

roundings have been degraded, but also that many have been capable of elevation when removed from their low surroundings. In opposition to these facts may be cited cases of some, the vices of whose ancestry have reappeared in their own lives in spite of all efforts at reform. The science of human nature has not reached a point where it is possible to distinguish between native and acquired qualities; but it is no less certain that inherited character is a powerful, though indeterminate, element in the composition of conduct. When, therefore, it is affirmed that every man is the author of his own character, we must consider that an element in the formation of such character is inherited character. The importance of this view will be appreciated when it is remembered how strenuously men are everywhere seeking their own happiness, and how the ideal of happiness differs according to different characters.

There are cases in which a man, accord-

ing to his own confession and the testimony of his friends, lived a pure and exemplary life, who nevertheless succumbed to some severe temptation, and committed acts which men with a far worse experience would hesitate to perform. There are virtuous women who commit deeds from which their abandoned sisters would often shrink. There are men of purity and benevolence who, when they fall, fall lower than the average of criminals. It is difficult to affirm of any man or woman that his or her character is good until their respective lives, with the temptations to which they have been subjected, are passed in review; and it can hardly be called accidental that the tombstone is the place where an estimate of character is most often to be found, although many epitaphs are lies. To those who look upon moral and immoral courses of conduct as effects of mere caprice, the estimate of real character is unimportant. But no one who looks at conduct scientifically can fail to be per-

plexed at the extraordinary deviations of good men into bad paths. We conclude that character often lies hidden in the realm of the unconscious. It is therefore a truth of science as well as of religion that in the crucible of life gold is often found in what seemed brass and clay, while many a highly valued gem is consumed in the devouring fire of experience.

The problem of ethics is thus further complicated by the fact that every influence for good may be brought to bear upon a man when his character is such that little benefit will follow from such influence.

The principle of heredity is every day becoming more and more important in philosophy. In spite of the fact that it is very difficult to show any regularity or law in the transmission of qualities from parent to child, the fact that there is such a transmission is established beyond all doubt. The theory of development clearly shows that the individual life is not sufficient to explain the tendencies which characterize

it. Particularly in the lower animal world are the effects of heredity clearly apparent. This principle must be taken account of by the psychologist as well as by the naturalist, particularly in the relation of the science of mind to neurology. It is clearly established that there is a certain correspondence between the phenomena of mind and those of the central nervous system. According to some, there is more than a correspondence, and the phenomena of the one are causally related to those of the other. The embryonic brain is comparatively simple and homogeneous in the earlier stages of its growth, and it is impossible to affirm that it possesses any more psychological significance than the liver or the heart. But the fully developed central nervous system in man, by reason of its complexity, admits of many modifications which are difficult to trace, much less to explain. Yet, just as diseases of other organs are transmitted from parent to child, so peculiarities and

disorders of the nervous system are transmitted, and often a definite hereditary physical condition may be shown to be the cause of mental changes. But even where the causes of nervous phenomena cannot be traced, it can be observed that mental characteristics, the physical conditions or accompaniments of which are unknown, pass to a man from his progenitors. It is very easy to say that hereditary tendencies, however marked, may be overcome by education and training, so that even were a man to be born with a distinctly vicious disposition, such a disposition might be changed by virtuous surroundings. It is easy to say that such vicious hereditary characteristics are uncommon. Indeed, with the exception of certain forms of disease, the qualities of mind and body which can be proved to be hereditary are in most cases trivial; but the fact that these qualities are transmitted cannot be denied. If the effect of this transmission can be overcome, the

means of the overcoming must be an effort of the will, or of motives effected by one's surroundings, or both. If the hereditary tendency is overcome by an effort of the will, according to our premises the will is dependent on the character. A character, then, which changes its evil tendencies is, according to the hypothesis, an evil character, which is absurd. If the hereditary tendency is overcome by motives supplied by one's surroundings, then there is no freedom to change. But it can be shown that the same surroundings will produce different results upon different men, the difference in result being the effect of a difference of character. If both surroundings and character combine to effect the change, there cannot be said to be freedom, for the surroundings are not the result of the man's volition, otherwise they are due to his character. But his character, before his surroundings have changed it, is something with which he has had nothing to do. A moral or an

immoral progenitor may have had a great deal to do with it, and such a progenitor may in turn examine his own pedigree to find remote causes for his individual characteristics. It may be said, however, that, independent of both character and surroundings, is the free ego or self, which controls man's moral action whatever the antecedents, whatever the surroundings. All roads lead to Rome; and I have yet to find any doctrine of ethics which did not lead one to the question as to the freedom of the will. This is a subject which has been worn absolutely threadbare in modern philosophy, and it is not my intention to attempt a solution of the problem in this treatise. Believing as I do that change is unthinkable except in the category of causation, the affirmation that the will is free, or that self is free to will, seems to me thoroughly unwarranted either by fact or reason. It has been said that either freedom is a fact or moral responsibility is a delusion. Whether this

alternative is to be accepted or not, from a philosophical point of view, it would seem to be inadvisable to make our metaphysics or logic the slave of ethics. If self and character be identical, then the qualities of self are determined in the first instance independently of the will. It may be said, however, that self can modify its own character, that is, character is a species of veneer that one finds self covered with at birth; but that on the presentation of motives self acts freely, and, removing one coat of veneer, applies another of a different kind. If we hold that self can be an object of knowledge, then it would be interesting to know wherein the self and the character differ. If, however, we hold the view that self is subject and is anterior to knowledge, the problem as to character and freedom has a very different meaning. Some of the great schools of modern German thought prefer to take the latter view. It is held that self, the ego, is not a phenomenon, is not given in

experience. Causality is a category applicable to phenomena only. It is logical, therefore, to regard self as independent of causality as itself a cause, but, even when viewed as changing, not an effect. The *noumenal* self, as *Ding an sich*, is not subject to the law of causation, and is therefore free. While this is logically plausible, it is an argument which will not bear close inspection. For example, the motive avarice, which is the effect on my character of the sight of gold, suggests that I should steal; the motive compassion — the effect upon my character of the sight of the owner of the gold — suggests that I should not steal. Suppose that there is no third alternative. If the owner is absent the compassion is absent, and theft follows. If the owner is present, it may be said that I can choose between stealing and not stealing. If I fail to steal, the failure is related to the motive as effect to cause. It is of no importance that we speak of the ego willing, if the partic-

ular act of will would not have taken place in the absence of the motive: the motive is the cause, and the will is not free.

The continuous action of surroundings on the will through the character produces a more or less decided tendency to will in a certain way. From this practical moralists draw the conclusion that indulgence of the appetites, for example, weakens the will, or, to speak more correctly, leads the will to will what satisfies the appetites. On the contrary, if the character of a man is sufficiently strong to overcome the influence of surroundings which tend to make him indulge his appetites, a continued course of such willing increases the resisting power. We have in these cases a sufficient answer to a statement often made with regard to the comparative strength of character in different men. It is sometimes said that a man who has successfully resisted a great temptation deserves as little credit as the one who has yielded to the same temptation; because in the

former case the effort required was not so great as in the latter case. We are told that X., whose appetites are not so strong as those of Y., deserves less credit than Y. if they are resisted; while if Y. yields to them his conduct is less culpable. This would be true if their characters were wholly formed and remained unchanged by their habits of volition and their surroundings. But it may be the case that X. is able to resist the great temptation because he has accustomed himself to resist temptations in general, while Y. does not appreciate the greatness of the temptation until he is confronted with it. In case Y. does resist the temptation, other things being equal, the sum of the amounts of resistance to previous temptations in the case of X. may be far greater than the whole amount of resistance required by Y. in the great temptation supposed.

It seems to me very doubtful whether the unconscious element in mental life is sufficiently considered. The qualities of

mind which lie latent or dormant may make or unmake one's happiness. Everybody knows how some chance idea, by its associations, may effect the reproduction of other ideas apparently long forgotten. In my opinion the unconscious tract of our mental life is the source of many of those capacities and abilities which sometimes surprise ourselves and others. Emergencies or the hardships of life may rouse an apparently commonplace man to deeds of heroism. The shocks and afflictions of this rough world may convert a sensualist into an ascetic, a doubter into a believer, a sentimentalist into a cynic. There is many a poor wretch whose whole life has been given to crime, who has hidden in the unconscious chambers of his mind capacities which may be awakened into high moral activity. And it will not do for us to sneer at the ecstatic fervor of the mystic because he cannot trace in consciousness the causes of his ecstasy, when we reflect that upon that region beyond the reach of

human consciousness there may be moving with irresistible energy the influence of an Infinite Spirit.

This uncertain element in character, which is not before consciousness, leads one to look with a kind of wonder on the career of one's fellow-men as well as on one's own career. Our moral life is not a smooth plain upon which our past is plainly visible and our destiny discernible. It is a rugged, rolling country, full of hidden ways, and pits and hills and valleys; while beyond lies a region of which we know but little, except by the faint light which lingers on the horizon, and is suggestive of something which we cannot see.

V.

The Motive to Morality.

If, as I have endeavored to show, the test of morality is the amount of happiness resulting from moral conduct, and if there be no intuitive knowledge of what is right or wrong, it would seem natural that experience should determine wherein morality consists. We have already found, however, that the experience of men as to what constitutes happiness is varied. We have concluded that both character and training determine to a very important extent the view of happiness which may be adopted. The empirical method in ethics can be applied to the solution of this problem. Just as the world is learning every day more and more about natural science, so it is growing more intelligent in ethical science. Just as we understand how to

apply electricity and steam better than our ancestors understood it, so we can learn from the experience of past generations what the best means are of promoting happiness, and so are in a way to reach a higher standard of moral conduct. It is not possible for us to enter here upon the consideration of the old question, whether civilization really increases human happiness, — for example, whether the average European or American is really happier than the average African or Asiatic? But assuming that barbarous conduct is less happy in its consequences than the conduct of those who are civilized, we meet with a difficulty. In what respect is the happiness of civilization superior to that of barbarism? We have already shown that the quality of happiness is not to be considered, but only its quantity or intensity. If, then, a man's character and training are such that he gains happiness from sensuality and debauchery and bloodshed, and would not understand or appre-

ciate the pleasures of civilization, we must test the morality of his conduct according to another standard than that of happiness. It will be generally admitted, however, that the more intelligent men become the better able they are to determine what is conducive to happiness. They pass from the natural state described by Hobbes into a civil state, and discover that their own happiness can be attained only by regarding the happiness of others. The way in which society regards human actions, the laws which are made and enforced, are the result of generalizations leading to a correct estimate of the means to happiness. Independently, therefore, of revelation and of intuition, it may be freely admitted that morality is progressive. The different degrees of happiness are discovered, their relative values estimated, and knowledge is gained as to how that happiness is best to be advanced. What we call the social instincts or feelings are a great aid in reaching this result; and the lower appe-

tites are largely controlled by the natural benevolence and sympathy which is found in every race of men in some slight degree. It is taught that the happiness of others must be the principal object of our action if we would secure our own. The formula of Bentham and the categorical imperative of Kant are admirable general rules of action; but the difficulty is to determine how to put them into practice.

1. There is the difficulty of applying the general rule to the special case which gives rise to questions of casuistry. Socrates tells us that only the unwise man will be immoral. This is theoretically true. If morality brings me more happiness than immorality, then, if I know this, and know what brings happiness, I am a fool if I am not moral. If an altruistic course of conduct will make me happier than an egoistic course, and I know it, then I am a fool if I am an egoistic. But the exceptions are very numerous, and men are extremely willing to make as many exceptions as

possible. When one man kills another in self-defense, it may be said that his conduct is altruistic, because society is benefited by it; but it is not supposed to be in accordance with the highest morality for a man to kill his wife's seducer, who takes what is of more value than life. Society excuses me if I slay the highway robber, but is not so lenient if I pursue beyond the law the dishonest bank officer who robs me of my property. Whether society is right or wrong, it is not necessary for our argument that we should determine. But it is very clear that altruism and morality are not always coincident.

The ideal way of applying a moral code is to be found in the Catholic theory of spiritual direction, although, unhappily, it is not practically justifiable. The rules of morality are laid down, for example, by the church. They are sufficient for the general guidance of conduct. When a difficulty occurs to any one of the faithful he goes to the confessional for an interpre-

tation of the moral law, just as we go to the physician for advice when observance of ordinary physiological laws is insufficient to preserve our health; and the sacerdotal authority in settling the question is derived from the same source as the moral law. I will not run the risk of criticising this religious position and possibly giving offense to those who find in the confessional a source of consolation. It is a system which works admirably in special cases, and the inviolate secrecy which is its safeguard as well as its danger has been remarkably preserved in the Latin church. Unhappily there are many men in the sacred office of priests who are as unable to deal with ethical difficulties as those who come to them for ghostly counsel. My impression is that those who adopt the altruistic theory are not disposed to follow the decrees of Rome. But many of them are equally unfaithful to their own creed.

Another form of the difficulty just sug-

gested comes from the limited sphere of human action. The essence of altruistic morality is to be found in conduct which promotes the greatest happiness of the greatest number; but one can act only with reference to individuals. While I am seeking to further the happiness of those in my immediate neighborhood, I may be seriously endangering the welfare of society. Society, it is true, protects itself against such a danger by its laws and customs; but what will further the happiness of society as a whole must be declared by society itself. There arises thus the danger of socialism as a result of such altruism; for it follows that in proportion as society collectively consults its own happiness, it will so far limit the action of a great number of individuals, not by the general laws which at present prevail, but by interference with the most petty details of human conduct. The result will be a revolt of society as individuals against the social organism, and men will rebel against

their own decrees. Mere benevolence and sympathy carried out into action will not necessarily promote the happiness of others. This century has shown, by the lamentable failure of many well-meant philanthropic schemes, how widely men's ideas as to happiness differ. For example, a benevolent *padrone* might be a greater moral reformer for an Italian colony in New York than many men of wealth and position who had high ideas of tenement-house improvement and of raising the condition of the poor. But the altruist may say, "Rome was not built in a day," and in time proper ways of promoting the happiness of society will be forthcoming. It must be confessed that there is a hopeful view of evolution, — an evolution like that described by Lessing, which is the unfolding of God in history for the moral education of men. There is an optimism in some of our English theories of evolution which finds its idol in the nineteenth century as the philosophers of the French Rev-

olution found their idol in the eighteenth. There is an optimism in the theory of evolution which makes the progress of the race the progress of a divine plan, with a glorious goal in the future. But there is a view of evolution which is atheistic, which finds no final cause (*Zweck*) in the progress of events. With materialistic ethics, it finds a civilization built on ruins, and in the uniformity of nature can recognize only the prospect of a condition little better than that of the present or of a future dissolution. It must be remembered that the rules of morality which are at present prevalent in Europe and America, with respect to person and property, are not all the result of generalizations as to happiness. Our moral code rests very considerably on the code of dogmatic religion, and our views of happiness have been modified accordingly. I am ready to admit, for the sake of argument, that the problem of happiness is soluble by the progress of experience. But the question is, What shall be

done in the mean time? We may give the various answers once again: Act for the happiness of others, or act for your own happiness, and in time the standard of happiness will be definitely determined. Even were this hopeful result probable, we should be in the presence of another difficulty, which seems to me disastrous to any purely rational system of ethics.

2. It is when the motives to moral conduct are considered that the various methods of ethics may be estimated most practically. As has already been said, even were the content of the moral judgment given either *a priori* or *a posteriori*, the natural question is, Why should one be moral? And it is at this point that one of the greatest difficulties arises.

If we take first the altruistic standard, we lay down the law that moral conduct is conduct which promotes the general happiness. It is our duty to further the welfare of the social organism. But why? If we say, because it is right, we found

our altruistic maxim on a principle which is more ultimate than that of altruism. If we say, because you are naturally benevolent and have social instincts, there is no need of a moral code at all, or else the code cannot have any power with those to whom self-interest is of more importance than benevolence or sympathy.

But we may say we should seek the happiness of others as the best way of securing our own happiness. Altruism in this case is only a form of Egoism. It has been justly observed by a contemporary writer in Germany that utilitarianism gives us the art, but not the science, of conduct. It is as if we were to lay down the golden rule as a maxim of morality, without giving reasons why it should be obeyed. Unless there is some other than a sentimental reason why we should seek to promote the happiness of others, it would be extremely foolish in a man to sacrifice his interests to those of others. One will lay down his life and sacrifice almost everything for

the sake of those whom one loves; but there are very few whose love for the social organism is so great as to submit without question or reason to the demands of society alone, especially when those demands interfere seriously with one's happiness.

Egoism is a far more logical theory of conduct. It is needless to explain why a man wishes his own happiness. Altruism, therefore, is only a form of egoism. It is an excellent prescription for happiness, and forms a sound principle of legislation as well as of personal conduct. But if I am only to act for the good of others for the sake of self-interest, it is conceivable that occasions may arise where what in my judgment is for my own interest is in conflict with the interests of others. Is it proper, then, that I should trust so far to the altruistic principle as to act in opposition to what I believe will promote my own happiness? A logical utilitarian would answer in the affirmative, for he would say

that the experience of mankind as to the means of happiness is superior to your individual judgment. If, however, I am willing to give up my altruism for the occasion, there is no ethical reason which can be urged against my decision. The only criticism of my conduct can be: It is unwise to put your own judgment in opposition to the general theory. The altruism with which one sets out must in many cases be given up for egoism. Admitting that the altruistic theory is the best, if I follow it from egoistic motives, I must logically become an egoist. It is the happiness of self which must be secured at any cost; and, practically, the man who helps others only to promote his own happiness is not morally better than the man who acts for himself alone.

The egoistic method, however, is seriously defective. It is very plainly shown by the experience of the race that to pursue happiness as an end of conduct is to encounter failure. To make happiness the

object of life is almost certain to result in unhappiness, and the logical result of egoistic hedonism is pessimism. There are many men born with a good character, and brought up in the midst of favorable conditions, whose pleasure is to be useful, and whose idea of happiness is unselfish, — the contemplation of the welfare of others; but these are exceptions. Preach egoism to the virtuous man and you will have but little to fear of the result. Preach egoism to the great multitude who "grunt and sweat under a weary life," whose physical organism is controlling, or at any rate influencing considerably, their mental disposition, who are without what we call the nobler instincts, and only the chastening influence of law, with its penalties, will prevent society from degradation. The philanthropic person may be safely trusted to follow his darling plan. The æsthetic dilettante may do no harm, even if he does but little good. Those who are "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought" may

find their pleasure in admirable pursuits. But, if I am not mistaken, the egoistic motive is that which corrupts our society. The mass of men, if their motives be selfish, will pursue a course of conduct which will be certain to end in unhappiness. It is not necessary for me to dwell upon this familiar theme. History is read to but little purpose if the career of the Epicureans at Rome and of the sensualists in the Paris of the eighteenth century do not present a living illustration of the results of this narrow hedonism. It will be said that the appreciation of this fact by repeated sad experiences will correct the natural impulse to excessive pleasure and its consequent pain. But it is to be feared that the human race becomes but little wiser as it grows older. One might suppose, for example, that an intelligent knowledge of the doctrine of chances would prevent men from staking their money on a losing game, especially when experience has demonstrated that the odds are against

them. But there are always multitudes to be found who rely upon the possibility of an improbable event. In the same way, in spite of experience and of the warning given by others, there are multitudes who willingly take the chances of a painful sequel to a life of pleasure. And if to be moral is to seek after happiness, there is no reason why any moral blame should be attached to the drunkard or libertine by an egoistic hedonist. This we shall find to be especially the case if a belief in immortality be given up. Any day or hour may end my existence, and I cannot afford to leave any pleasure untouched which lies within my reach. It seems to me, then, that from a purely scientific point of view, egoism is the only logical course of conduct, and pessimism is its natural result. It is idle to say that such a course can be regulated by law. The only reason why we have laws which limit the egoist in the pursuit of happiness is that there is leaven in society which is not egoistic. Society

will not tolerate such a method; and history shows that where society has followed an egoistic theory of morals, it has speedily become impotent to preserve its decaying life by any legal sanctions. If murder is avoided only through fear of the gallows or of prison, society will soon do away with the gallows and the prison. If crimes against the purity of women are avoided only from physiological or pathological causes, then there will be but little purity left at the mercy of those who wish to sin. If property be respected only through fears of legal process, society is not likely to tolerate such an institution as property. From a scientific point of view, I fail altogether to see what duty I owe to the social organism, about which one hears and reads so much. My own happiness is of far greater importance to me than this conglomerate of individual men, most of whom are nothing to me. A philanthropy which is pursued at the expense of the happiness of the philanthropist is, it seems to me, the height of folly.

It is at this very point that the inquirer is confronted by the great religions of the world with their ethical power. This ethical power is twofold. It consists in a constant moral code and the presentation of an efficient motive. The general theory of right, of duty, and of character which I have suggested is not inconsistent with any of the prevailing systems of religion. The existence of the idea of duty can best be explained by affirming the existence of a God, who is the author of right. The revelation of the will of God furnishes the material of the moral judgment. This is especially true in the case of the Christian religion. If there be a moral code which it is our duty to follow, the question then arises, How can a man whose character is immoral, who is brought up amid immoral surroundings, be led to obey the moral law? From a purely scientific point of view, there is no satisfactory answer to the question. The maxims of morality may be presented to such a man, and yet there

will be no motive to insure his obedience. The scientific doctrine that hereditary influences may produce a character with bad tendencies finds its theological counterpart in the Augustinian doctrine of original sin. The problem is to make moral conduct desirable; and, so long as the character is bad and the motives insufficient, obedience to moral law cannot readily be secured. It is true that if all morality results in happiness, a man in the pursuit of happiness may often attain to morality. It is in this way that non-religious systems of ethics have arisen. But every moral reformer knows that maxims and advice may be absolutely ineffective in inducing men to lead moral lives, — just as every clergyman knows that the most persuasive preaching may fail to convince even those whose characters are not altogether bad. The Christian solution of the problem is very simple; and the results of the Christian system, judged empirically, have been extraordinary. Christianity

maintains that the character acquires a good tendency through supernatural influence, so that in what is called by theologians regeneration, or the new birth, the soul receives an impulse by the action of God himself. The result is that what once seemed undesirable to the man of bad character now seems desirable, and the immoral ideal is exchanged for an ideal of moral perfection — a likeness to the source of right. The Christian religion explains this regeneration of character by maintaining that God, although hating sin, has personally loved the sinner, and, in the revelation of himself in the person of Jesus Christ, has made it possible for men to be moral and so attain to happiness. I am aware that the above statement of Christian teaching may be criticised for its vagueness, and must be modified according to various particular creeds. But whatever the specific form of Christianity may be, the important point is that love to God, as revealed in Christ, is the motive

of obedience to the moral law. What morality is, is determined empirically by referring to God's revealed will. Why one should be moral is determined by the influence of God on the human character, which makes conduct coincide with the will of God because of love toward God. This is evidently a subject lying outside the limits of scientific method. But I am far from believing that the negative results reached in the earlier part of this book destroy the apologetical value of ethics. At the same time it would seem that Christianity is of vast apologetic importance to any practicable system of ethics. One may make a broader statement, and say that ethics without religion is a body without life. Instead of affirming with Mr. Matthew Arnold, then, that religion is "morality touched with emotion," I should prefer to say that morality without religion is without its most important element. It has been often observed that the Christian religion, by its exaltation of

what is called self-denial, is directly opposed to the systems of the Greek and Roman world. But it has been shown that, in it, aside from the question of its truth or falsity, are to be found those elements which bind it to the feelings of the world. The doctrine of the Incarnation brings God in direct personal relation to the sympathies of every human soul. It is in this respect that Christianity holds a peculiar position as an ethical power, in spite of its stringent moral code and its somewhat pessimistic view of the prevalence and power of evil. It is often compared with the other great religions of the world, such as Brahminism, Buddhism, and Mohammedanism. But these noble or seductive creeds have found no God in a manger. Their divinity has never been despised and bleeding. From the heads of those who are its deities no crown of thorns has drawn the blood of our humanity, which is so weak and weary. We find no cross, nor cruel nails, nor soldier's spear. Their sepulchres

are not empty. A strange and wild fanaticism, an eternal and hopeless annihilation, or a throng of beckoning harlots supply the place of a Redeemer's advocacy and those influences which suggest a life of peace. The form of the moral judgment is common to all, but its material content, as presented by Christianity, urges upon the reluctant mind the power of an endless life as a motive, and the will becomes the servant of the author of right and of the rewarder of morality. And so this power is illustrated most conspicuously in the conduct of many who profess to hold this relationship to God. There are not a few a part of whose lives has been one long, studious attempt to seek pleasure at the sacrifice of virtue, but who have given up everything for the sake of God. In the mind of many a man, hidden altogether from the sight of others, the conflict between duty and desire has been waged as in the old Greek tragedies, and victory has been gained by the change of character, so that

the sacrifice of that which was the object of one's life and love has been made in order that the moral law might be obeyed. It is these instances of asceticism in the inmost part of a man's soul, and this hidden immolation of the dearest part of his life, which are the spiritual counterpart of monasticism, — that marvelous effect of religion, — which, whether founded on Christianity or not, is a most remarkable evidence of the power of human will.

In addition to this, it is held by Christians — at least, by the majority of Christians — that the world is only an arena of moral conflict preparatory to the period after death, when happiness or unhappiness await the moral agent according to his actions here. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the doctrine of immortality in its relation to ethics, and the prevalence of the doctrine among many races has been supposed by some to point to the reality of a life beyond the grave. It is very difficult to account for the exist-

ence of belief in immortality, unless we refer to Revelation. So far as science teaches us, there is no foundation for the doctrine except its prevalence and the necessity of immortality as a condition of effective moral action. All the arguments which have been employed are either fanciful, — resting on metaphysical misconceptions, — like the arguments of the Phædo, or they tend simply to show the persistence of force. The analogical argument of Bishop Butler, for example, falls far short of making out a case for the believer in personal immortality. The question is not, Does death end all? Of course death does not end all. The question is, Do I, do you, survive the death of the body? And I have yet to find the science which furnishes premises from which a conclusion can be drawn.

By Kant and by other able writers immortality has been regarded as a necessary postulate of ethics. Suppose, for example, that a person be told to do what is

right in order to become happy. He is informed that the immediate results of his difficult course of conduct will be unpleasant, but that self-denial is the means to happiness. Suppose that such an one dies before his happiness is attained, what becomes of the agreement between virtue and happiness? Great fault has been found with certain forms of religion for dwelling on the offer of reward to virtue. It is held that men should not be bought to do right, but should do what is right for its own sake, on account of its intrinsic character. It will be an interesting spectacle when the code of action is first introduced for man's acceptance without the promise of reward or punishment. Unquestionably a very large number of men embrace the Christian faith because they are afraid of being punished if they are bad, and expect to go to heaven if they are good; but the more this idea is rooted in their minds the stronger their feelings are to the Being who rewards them. If it is immoral to

follow a code of ethics for the sake of the reward of moral action, what can be said of the morality of the altruist or the egoist? Unless there is a prospect of immortal reward, in many instances it will not seem worth the while to be moral where morality seems opposed to self-interest. It is at any rate very evident that, if there be no immortal life, this world is an unweeded garden. There is not an ethical writer of importance since the time of Plato who has not dwelt upon the prosperity which often attends immoral conduct. Imprudent immorality often brings its punishment immediately; but "the wicked in great power spreading himself like a green bay tree" is a spectacle not confined to the time of David. What are we to say of the wrongs which are unredressed, of the crimes undiscovered, of hypocrisy which passes as virtue, and vice which is pursued through life to be ended by a painless death? What are we to say of the good actions which go unrewarded,

of virtues unnoticed, of lives devoted to morality, but hidden from public sight, and often maimed and distorted by injury and persecution? The answer that naturally comes is, There is an immortal life beyond the grave, where virtue is rewarded and vice receives its punishment.

> "Oh, yet we trust that, somehow, good
> Will be the final goal of ill."

And this is where the Christian, who may agree to many of the propositions of the pessimist, takes a widely different view. The thorny path, beyond which the pessimist does not raise his eyes, is to the Christian indeed a way to Calvary; but at the end of the crooked, weary road he has glimpses of unending rest. But there is misery in the world as well as crime. The prison walls do not inclose all the criminals, and not all those inclosed by prison walls are criminal. There are many who have never heard of God, to whom religion is a sham and virtue only another name for vice. There are beside this the wards

of our asylums for the insane, where the mind is struggling to recover its lost throne. The bare walls throw back grotesque or awful images; the silence seems to be full of unearthly sounds; sensation is torture; and life a long, dark way without purpose, without hope, without end.

Is the wish, then, father to the thought? Does not the belief in immortality indicate that immortality is a fact? If every grave is a goal of life, then, when the eyes of the dead are closed, no face can be raised towards immortal life with immortal hope. It is the categorical statement of science that dust, not Heaven, is our home. From this point of view every funeral becomes desperate. We say that "our brother is dead, is no more," and science does not tell us that he is asleep or that he is in Paradise. The undertaker is the most appropriate clergyman; the song of Jerusalem the golden sounds discordant and false. The Paradise to which we turn our wistful eyes is only a graveyard or a vault. A

few fading flowers, a few tears, a few fragments of earth, fall upon the dead. We leave it all under the sun, or under the stars, or under the gray sky, with the waving grass and nodding trees around it. Religion is no longer ours. We go home and try to imagine that the vacant chair is again occupied, that the echoes of a voice now silent still linger, and that the heart which once was ours is here, and not far away under the cypresses, alone forever. And if the pessimistic alternative embitters the contemplation of the death of others, it embitters also the contemplation of life upon our own part.

If science does not tell us of immortality, if justice demands immortality, if the only redress of evil here is redemption from evil and recompense hereafter, and if there be a principle which controls our lives, pessimism rises and declares that its thesis is proved. To the pessimist there is a Being whom one cannot call God, for

God is not a fiend. There is but one world, and that world is a troubled dream, a hell. With such premises the conclusion is inevitable, and one will be tempted to say, I was born in spite of myself. I have lived, and the world is bad. Behind me is a chaos of disappointments. As each day dawns I find that what I thought was a real good is at best a shadow, is always an evil. The past is gone; the present does not realize my expectations; the future is without hope. I have danced long enough to this devil's music; I have lived long enough in this tomb. Why should I endure this monotony and await this pleasure which is always expected, never realized, so long as there is a strong rope, a sharp knife, a deep stream, or an active poison? Death is better; but it is not for me to complete the *Nunc dimittis* of Rabelais. "Let the curtain fall;" not the farce, but the tragedy, is played.

It is when Science is dumb that Religion

begins to speak; and the fact is suggested that supernatural light is rare, and when it shines on earth it is not an undulation of the ether, nor, indeed, any datum of science.